

Poisonous Spider Bites Vineyard Worker¹

California NURSE Project²

SUMMARY : CASE 192-028-001

A farm laborer was working in a vineyard, cleaning weeds away from the base of the grape vines with a shovel. He bent under the vines to check his work and was bitten on the left side of the neck by a spider. The spider may have been a Brown Recluse or some other poisonous spider. Fifteen minutes after the bite the worker began to feel dizzy and sick to his stomach. The employer drove the worker to a hospital emergency department, where the worker was treated and released.

How could this injury have been prevented?

- Check before working under vines and other hidden areas for spiders, yellow jackets, rattlesnakes, and other poisonous insects or animals.
- One person at the work site should be trained in first aid. The worker could have had a bad reaction to the spider bite.
- Call 911 (emergency services) for poisonous insect bites and stings.

The NURSE (Nurses Using Rural Sentinel Events) project is conducted by the California Occupational Health Program of the California Department of Health Services, in conjunction with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. The program's goal is to prevent occupational injuries associated with agriculture. Injuries are reported by hospitals, emergency medical services, clinics, medical examiners, and coroners. Selected cases are followed up by conducting interviews of injured workers, co-workers, employers, and others involved in the incident. An on-site safety investigation is also conducted. These investigations provide detailed information on the worker, the work environment, and the potential risk factors resulting in the injury. Each investigation concludes with specific recommendations

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2. NURSE Project, California Occupational Health Program, 2151 Berkeley Way, Annex 11, Berkeley, CA 94704.